The Good and Bad Lands of Alaska.

The "bad lands" of Alaska—the ice capped mountain region where the big glaciers are found, and where the country will probably never afford the means of sustaining any but a meager population—lie to the north of the Sitka region, forming the eastern and northern shores of the gulf of Alaska. This is the region of high, inaccessible and eternally snowclad mountain ranges. Here Mount St. Elias marks the highest point on the North American continent, while Fairweather, Crillon, La Perouse and a half dozen others not yet named are fit mates to their grand neighbor. Flowing to the southward down the slopes of this Alpine region numerous glaciers follow the valleys and pierce through all obstacles till they reach the inland waterways made so familiar by tourists' descriptions. The sight of these ice streams, the crashing of their faces as they break and fall into the water, the floating bergs apparently about to hem in and destroy the steamer, all tend to leave in the minds of people who see only this part of Alaska an impression of desolate grandeur not easily effaced.

But the glacier region of Alaska is comparatively small. It is, in fact, a rare incident, and not a type of the general topography of the country.

Leaving the region just described and steering westward, the traveler leaves all trace of this forbidding landscape behind, and his first glimpse of land, some miles west from Sitka, is of low green hills softly rounded and clothed from base to summit in verdure. Patches of timber darken the valleys and mark the course of innumerable streams, while every islet—almost every rock—has its clustering growth of trees. From Kodiak island westward the timber on the Aleutian islands is confined to the smaller species of trees. Willow and larch thickets still cling to the lower valleys, but all the rest of the country is covered during the summer with an exceedingly rich and diverse growth of grass. During the winter months the grasses gradually die until nothing is seen except the thick mantle of moss, which grows everywhere in Alaska. — San Francisco Chronicle.

Aerial Rapid Transit.

The day of aerial navigation is at hand. Persons now living will see travel in the air as common as it is now on land and water. The writer of this prepared the first comprehensive article on electric lighting published in any Pittsburg newspaper and well remembers the confident assertions at the time that electricity could not be used for light except in a very crude way, that it would never do for dwellings. That was only a few years ago, but it is already ancient history.

He published the first article on the cable railways which appeared in this city—a summary of description and cost as given by an agent trying to introduce the system at Cincinnati. These things, which would have been wonders in his boyhood, are commonplaces now. Aerial navigation will be a commonplace before many years have passed. To the numerous short articles on this subject which have appeared this one is added to show the progress made toward the new means of passenger and freight traffic.

To begin with, a reference to Professor Langley's recent paper on the internal work of the wind. He found that in a wind of 20 miles an hour there were fluctuations ranging from 10 to 35 miles at intervals of only 20 seconds. From this he argued a condition of the wind involving upward and backward currents, and these, he believed, explained why birds can rise and circle about without moving a wing.

From this he proceeds to show how an inclined plane, heavier than the air, may rise and be sustained in motion in the teeth of the wind by utilization of this internal work. Such a plane, capable of changing its inclination, will gain energy by falling and expend it by rising. All that it would need of power would be such as is necessary to carry it over the region of calm. For the rest it could depend on the internal work of the wind and on rising and falling.—Pittsburg Times.

High Mountains of the East Coast.

There is a prevailing impression, even among would be graduates, that Mount Washington is the highest mountain in America east of the Mississippi river. When, where or how this idea obtained would be difficult to say, but it is a fact nevertheless that the item most frequently met with in the "Column of Information" is something like this: "The highest mountain on the Atlantic coast or in the Appalachian range is Mount Washington, New Hampshire, height 6,285 feet." Take down the atlas while we investigate this high mountain question. In North Carolina alone we find 14 peaks higher than the Yankee Titan; Mount Mitchell, 6,717 feet; Balsam Cone, 6,671; Clingman's Dome, 6,660; Sandy Knob, 6,512; Hairy Bear, 6,567; Cat Tail peak, 6,595; Gibbe's peak, 6,586; Mount Alexander, 6,477; Sugar Loaf, 6,401; Potato Top, 6,393; Black Knob, 6,637; Mount Henry, 6,373; Bowler's Pyramid, 6,356, and Roan mountain, 6,318.

From the above it will be seen that Mount Mitchell is the monarch of the eastern range, and that he is 432 feet higher than the foundation of the Mount Washington observatory. These measurements are by Guyot, Mitchell and Holmes of the United States survey, and are doubtless correct.—St. Louis Republic.

Unsatisfactory Apologies.

"No," said the housemaid, "I don't apologize to a man when I throw a bucket of water down the front steps to wash 'em, and he comes along and gets drenched. I've tried apologizing, but I've found there's nothing you can say to a man that will satisfy him."—Exchange.

It used to be the custom in the Belgian parliament to supply not only the members, but the reporters in the gallery, with brandy and water ad libitum. Every member habitually spoke with a glass of brandy and water beside him, and when he had finished another was brought.

THE WALLS OF PARIS.

ERECTED AT GREAT COST, BUT NOT OF MUCH USE IN WAR.

Such Fortifications Keep the Besiegers Out, but They Also Keep the Besieged In to Face Starvation—Paris Ambitious to Surpass London.

One day the wise men of Paris consulted together and agreed that it would be well to surround the city with an elaborate system of fortifications. The time was not far from the year 1840. Perhaps it was not, accurately speaking, a council of wise men, but only one of the many plans that constantly evolved from the brain of Louis Philippe, who did so much to beautify Paris and improve it artistically and from a sanitary standpoint. Anyhow the decree was issued that Paris should be a fortified city, and forthwith thousands of men and hundreds of carts were set at work building the huge embankments that now girdle the French capital.

For five years the men dug, the teamsters swore at their much abused horses, the earthen wall grew and grew, and one morning Paris woke up and found itself a city within a fortress. In the first place there was a moat about 50 feet wide and as many feet deep, which must be crossed by an invading enemy. Above it towered the steep side of the bank, on the top of which was a parapet 19 feet wide. The latter would accommodate the French army in safety, and what a splendid situation it would afford the defenders to utterly annihilate the invaders! The fortification was constructed at varying angles in order that the French infantry and artillery might pour a flank fire into the ranks of the hostiles whenever any hostiles presumed to surround Paris. The entire system, completed, cost the French nation 140,000,000 francs, about $28,000,000 in American money. The total length of the fortification is 21 miles.

But years passed, and an invader trampled the "sacred soil of France" under his sturdy German feet. The fortification was still there, and the residents of the city often walked out to it and from its parapet watched for signs of the Germans. It was valuable for reserved seats in which to view some of the panorama of the war—simply that and nothing more. The Germans were not such fools as to walk up to it and expose their precious bodies to French bullets. No, indeed; they camped out on the hills surrounding Paris and amused themselves shooting at the most prominent steeples in the city with their long range cannon. Upon some days the French soldiers marched out of the gates of the avenues intersecting the fortifications. They looked grim and determined. Somehow or other, as often as the French soldiers sallied forth, so often they straggled home. Not all of them, it is true, for the mute stone monuments in the environs of Paris bear silent testimony to the bravery with which they fought. The fortification, however, was still there, and it is there yet, and the citizens of Paris are beginning to ask themselves whether it is worth the money that it cost and the additional thousands that it takes to keep it in repair.

In this age of the world a "walled city" is possessed of two advantages. The first is that from the wall the defenders can fight to save their lives and property—the second is an advantage for the other chap. That wall of defense is also a wall of imprisonment. It is palpable to any one that it is much easier to keep an animal in a cage than it is to hunt the animal in the woods. The gay Parisian and his country relatives got behind the wall, and all the Germans had to do was to see that they kept behind it until they were starved into submission. The officers of the German army knew that when the Parisians were ready to sally it must be by one of the main exits from that fortification. How easy, therefore, to keep excellent watch of the exits! For that reason the fortifications about Paris are no longer the "fashionable thing" in military circles. In fact, the descendants of the bonest bourgeois are inclined to poke all manner of fun at what their ancestors sacredly revered. The mighty earthen embankments are overrun with cowpaths and footpaths, and it does not take more than half an eye to see that Paris recognizes the imbecility of intrenching herself behind a costly ditch and wall of earth, when the enemy between breakfast and dinner can sit on the hillside and fire his little popguns and big popguns all day long at the handsome buildings and most sacred edifices.

Then, too, Paris is becoming ambitious. Not that Paris has not always been ambitious in certain channels, but that a new channel has opened. Paris is jealous of London. London is the largest city in the world, so far as population is concerned. If those miserable fortifications were torn down, and the municipal limits of Paris extended through the many suburbs which really are a portion of the city, Paris would very likely be larger than London, and, therefore, from a French standpoint, possibly from that of others, the capital of the world.

The fortifications, however, are not all that protect Paris, or rather are not all that are meant to protect Paris. Beyond the wall of the fortifications there exists a circle of forts, gems in the coronet of hillsides that crown the lovely city. Of these forts the most important, so I am told, is that of Mount Valerien. It was never taken by the Germans when they invested Paris. For that fact Mount Valerien has the right to be congratulated.

The natural defense of Paris is upon the hills that surround the city. Once permit them to be captured, and Paris itself will be at the mercy of any enemy. All the embankments capable of being constructed between the Arc de Triomphe and the heights of St. Cloud and other elevations along the Seine could not protect the city for a moment from the artillery fire certain to be directed from the hillsides facing the city.

Since the siege of 1870-1 the Parisians have left nothing undone to place the city in the best possible condition to resist the advances of hostiles. One can scarcely tell why, but there seems to exist in the Parisian atmosphere a sort of presentiment that in case of continental war Paris will once more be the scene of struggle.—Cleveland Leader.

The Editor's Advice.

Young Humorist (to the editor)—Have you looked over the comic sketches I left with you?

Editor—I have.

Y. H.—They ain't as good as I might do if I hadn't so many other irons in the fire.

Editor (handing back the manuscript)—Here they are, and I advise you——

Y. H.—What?

Editor—Put them with the other irons.—Tammany Times.

The great struggle of life is first for bread. Then butter on the bread, and, last, sugar on the butter.

ONLY FRIENDS.

Engaged to him? I've known him all my life.
Through many a trouble we've stood by each other.
But marriage is a different thing. His wife?
I'd think as soon of marrying my brother.
Of course there never were two better friends—
Though still mere friends—than he and I.
But loving!
Why, when you bring that in, all comfort ends
In weariness of proving and disproving.
Indeed I wish that he would marry. So
I told him only yesterday, for clearly
A man should have his home. But he, you know,
Is hard to please and loves his freedom dearly.
They say he often visits Agnes Lee?
Ah, yes—they're neighbors—she's a lovely woman,
Though not in her first youth. No more is he.
But she's a saint, and he's—well—very human.
I'm sure I wish they'd marry. Then, you see,
I'd have not one, but two dear friends. I wonder
Why the old gossip brings this tale to me
And if it's true or just her stupid blunder?
* * * * * * * *
And people talk of Agnes for his wife,
And not one word from him to me about it!
I know I've told him nearly all my life—
He says he tells me everything—I doubt it.
I wish she'd go away. Dear, won't you sing?
What! I look tired and pale? Ah, now you're jesting!
What did she say to Meg—the horrid thing—
Of Shakespeare's lady and too much protesting?
What do I want? I wouldn't marry him
Were he the last man. Yet, consistence human!
The taste goes out of life, the light grows dim,
To think that he might choose another woman.
* * * * * * * *
Alone at last, thank heaven! Why, that's his ring!
At home? No—yes—I'll see what this portends,
Though when I'm tired I look like—anything!
That matters nothing—we are only friends.
—Katherine E. Conway in Donahoe's Magazine.

The Bagpipe and Its Music.

Though now associated with Scotland, the bagpipe is an instrument of great antiquity and was known long ago to some Indian races, also to the Italians and Bretons. It appears to have reached its most popular development from the musical and utilitarian view in the case of the highland bagpipe. The groundwork of the instrument is, as the name implies, a bag of skins sewed together, and of course perfectly airtight. This condition is aided by the use of treacle, which is poured into the bag and allowed to soak well into it.

Into the bag are fitted five wooden stocks, generally of crocus or ebony. These stocks in their turn hold the three drones, the chanter, and the mouthpiece, the chanter being perforated by the note holes, while the mouthpiece is used for filling the bag. Each of the drone pipes and the chanter are fitted with reeds made of Spanish cane, contrary to the general impression, which imagines the chanter to be a kind of flute and the drones hollow sticks.

Bagpipe music has a fixed scale, and the treble or G clef is the only one used. The great difficulty of playing, however, is to obtain the doubling of the notes at once quickly and clearly. This profusion of doubled or grace notes, as they are called, makes the manuscript of bagpipe music look something like a document filched from the British museum.—Chambers' Journal.

Impartial Dealing With the Press.

The last time Bart Scott was in Washington he told a good story about a member of the Wisconsin legislature. The old man was elected to the state senate from one of the lumber counties and was proud of the honor. When the legislature met in Madison, Senator Blank was daily in his seat before the time for calling the senate to order and spread the Madison Journal before him to read the news of the day. One morning after the chaplain's prayer, while the clerk of the senate was reading the journal of the proceedings of the previous day, a gentleman arose and said, "Mr. President, I move to dispense with the reading of the journal." Senator Blank quietly folded his Madison Journal, arose and said: "Mr. President, I move also to dispense with the reading of The Times, The Inter Ocean and all other papers. There should be no distinction against The Journal."—Philadelphia Times.

Queer Things In a Well.

While workmen were once engaged in sinking a well on the farm of David Dunning, in Washington township, Ringgold county, Ia., they had some queer experience. At a depth of 14 feet they found between a peck and a half bushel of white walnuts, or butternuts, and at a depth of 26 feet a fine pair of deer's horns and a large log of wood. The horns were very soft when first taken out, but soon hardened on exposure to the air. The peculiar part of the whole affair is the fact that there is not a single butternut tree known to be growing in that portion of the state.—St. Louis Republic.

To Remove Marking Ink.

To remove marking ink from linen, dip the article into a solution formed of an ounce cyanide of potassium and 4 ounces of water. After a few hours the stain will be obliterated. This is very effectual, but the mixture is highly poisonous. Therefore the greatest care should be exercised in keeping it away from children, and it should be plainly marked poison.—New York World.

SHARP LOBBY WORK.

How a Millionaire Was Made the Innocent Instrument of the Game.

"If you will step out into the office of the sergeant-at-arms, you will find old Huntington sitting there with a bag of money brought here to defeat the funding bill."

A note reading in about these words was brought into the senate chamber one afternoon by a doorkeeper and put in the hand of Senator Thurman. The Old Roman glanced at it. There was no signature. The senator twisted the paper in his fingers and sat still a few moments.

Then he pulled out his red handkerchief—the bandanna—and blew his nose. He got up and strolled out through the marble room and into the office of the sergeant-at-arms. Sure enough, there sat Huntington holding a handbag, and in confidential communication with him were two well known members of the lobby. Senator Thurman glanced about the room, asked where French was and strolled back to the senate chamber. He went in on the Republican side, sat down by Senator Edmunds' seat and showed the bit of paper. When Edmunds had read it, Thurman whispered to him a few words, got up and crossed over to his own side of the chamber and took his seat.

Presently Senator Edmunds got up, went out into the corridor and walked into the office of the sergeant-at-arms, looked around and then, as if not finding some one he was in search of, went back to the chamber. Instead of resuming his seat, he went over to Senator Conkling and had a few moments' talk with him. Then Conkling went out of the chamber, glanced into the door of French's office and came back. A little later Senator Thurman got the funding bill before the senate.

Then ensued a series of terrific attacks on the influences which, it was asserted, were arrayed against the measure. Thurman, Edmunds and Conkling lashed the unnamed lobby without mercy. The funding bill went through practically without opposition. Senators who had had honest doubts about the expediency of the bill did not venture to vote against it.

The anonymous note to Thurman was a lobby trick. It came from a man who had failed to form business relations with Huntington, and who saw the chance for which the lobbyist is always waiting—to get even. Huntington had just reached the city and had come from the depot to the capitol to inquire about some legislation in which he was interested. There was nothing more dangerous than a nightshirt and a toothbrush in the handbag to which the senator imagined he clung with care.

He had dropped into the office of the sergeant-at-arms, but it was a semipublic waiting room, and he was chatting with legislative agents while waiting to get his information. His presence there at the time had nothing to do with the funding bill. Yet the smartest senators in the whole body fell into the trap set for them.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Asiatic Taste.

The Asiatic does not know anything particular about gold and silver. He has no tools except pinchers and a hammer, and he has not the power of producing intense heat, yet he will do things with the metals which his European brother cannot do with all his appliances and skill. No doubt, if he is an hereditary workman, something has passed into his fingers which cannot be acquired by a new competitor, and he has the advantage of remembering patterns originally designed by the men of genius, who are apt, at intervals perhaps of centuries, to crop up in the artist families. But is that the whole of the matter?

We doubt it greatly and believe that there is an Asiatic "taste" or instinct for the beautiful which is as true in its way as the instinct of an Athenian sculptor or a Florentine wielder of the brush. It takes a different direction—we see that most perfectly when we compare the Alhambra with a Gothic cathedral—and it seems liable to strange, long pauses, like the one said to have been recently observable in Japanese art; but it is real, it is original, and we can see no reason, save want of demand, why it should ever die out.

If that is true—and it must be true more or less—and Europe can ever use the Asiatic fingers without taking the skill out of them in the collision between the tastes of the two races, the jeweler of Birmingham may justifiably begin to tremble. Machinery will not help him much, and the "superior energy" of the British workman will not help him at all. Energy is not the quality wanted to produce a necklet or a ring. What is wanted is a gift which the Asiatic workmen in thousands did once possess and may display again, and the power of so utilizing that gift that it shall manifest itself even when the designs are not stereotyped in the mind, but have been freshly taken in.—London Spectator.

Benjamin Franklin's Wife.

The Pennsylvania Magazine gives a very unflattering description of Benjamin Franklin's wife. It is taken from the diary of Daniel Fisher, who was Franklin's secretary for a short time. "She sat on the floor at a neighbor's. She assumed the airs of extraordinary freedom and great humility, lamented heavily the misfortunes of those who are unhappily infected with a too tender or benevolent disposition, said she believed all the world claimed a privilege of troubling her pappy—so she usually calls Mr. Franklin—with their calamities and distress, giving us a general history of many such wretches and their impertinent applications." He mentions "the turbulence and jealousy and pride of her disposition" and the violence of her invectives. Pointing to Franklin's son one day, she exclaimed, "There goes the greatest villain upon earth!"

More or Less Name.

In the early days in California a young German, John G. Almondinger, wishing to Americanize himself as much as possible, applied to the legislature and had his name changed to John G. Almond. A few days later a man named John Smith applied to the same legislature, and after reciting a long catalogue of the ills to which he was subject, owing to his unfortunately common name, he said in conclusion, "And whereas I have noticed that you have curtailed the name of J. G. Almondinger to J. G. Almond and have not disposed of the 'inger,' which seems to be lying around loose, I respectfully request that the same may be added to my name." The result of this appeal is not stated.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Wesley and Evolution.

William H. Mills of San Francisco has in his library two books written by John Wesley, in which he says the founder of Methodism put forth the theory of evolution. These books are entitled "Wesley's Philosophy" and were printed in New York in 1823 by Mason & Bangs. In these books are many passages, asserting in the strongest terms that there is a unity in creation and controverting the theory of special creations.

The practice of ocean traveling for the sake of health was known to the ancient Greek physicians, but it later fell into disrepute.